

Packing Plans

How to dress in Saudi Arabia and on Eskan

On Eskan standard American dress is allowed but dressing for downtown is more conservative. The best fashion guideline for those living in Saudi Arabia is "conceal rather than reveal". Foreigners (that also includes every one assigned to or living at Eskan Village) are expected to follow local customs, particularly in public places. As a general rule:

- Foreign women's proper dress in public is an Abayah that is made of non-see-through material, has long sleeves and is floor length. Under the Abayah women are advised to wear loose fitting skirts with hemlines well below the knee or long pants. Tops must have sleeves that are at least elbow length and modest necklines. Avoid jeans, tight pants or leggings. Women must always carry a head scarf while downtown. The common practice for foreign women is to drape the scarf around the neck and cover her hair only if asked to do so by a member of the religious police, a MuttawaA. This however, leaves you open to the initial confrontation with the MuttawaA; so to cover or not to cover is a personal choice until told to do so. On Eskan Village there are often semi-formal and formal parties hosted so women might want to include a dress appropriate for these types of events. Party dresses of all styles and sizes are available for purchase on the local economy.
- Outside of Eskan Village foreign men should wear long trousers and shirts, which cover the upper torso, with sleeves. Shirts should be buttoned at least to the second button from the top. Men must avoid wearing shorts in public and wearing clothing with designs and slogans that may be perceived as being offensive. Their clothing should never be torn or contain holes.
- Teenagers are also required to comply with adult dress standards while downtown.
- All military members must bring their service dress or class 'A' uniforms and mess dress if you have one, along with appropriate clothing to attend coat and tie events that are hosted often on Eskan and off Eskan at the embassies. Three sets of the uniform of the day will be issued to you upon your arrival.